



Public Health Connections

Southern Connecticut State University
School of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

A Message from the Chair Dr. Jean Breny

Welcome to our Spring, 2019 Public Health Connections newsletter! The weather is getting warmer, the sun is shining brighter, and we are winding down another exciting semester in the Department of Public Health. I hope that you are feeling a much-needed sense of renewal this April.

In March, I traveled with several of our faculty to Salt Lake City, Utah to attend the 70th Annual Conference of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE). The theme of health equity and the social ecology of health resonated throughout the conference, including an outstanding plenary by Dr. Tony Iton, Senior Vice President for the California Endowment. His presentation was a call to action for us to remain focused on the social and environmental causes of disease, address power differentials in communities, and to create a “narrative of inclusion” to provide a shared sense of belonging. I am honored to be leading SOPHE as its President this year as we continue to work towards health equity and health in all policies.

Your Department of Public Health has been very busy this semester with three newly approved graduate courses in Public Health Leadership; faculty-student collaborations on community-based research projects, international conference presentations, and accolades across campus! In this issue of Public Health Connections, you will read about some of these achievements and activities.

My congratulations go out to faculty who will receive University awards this semester; Dr. Vicki Zigmont will receive the coveted Joan Finn Junior Faculty Research Award; Dr. Michele Vancour will receive the Robert E. Jirsa Service Award, most deservedly; and Alycia Santilli, Director of CARE, will be inducted to the Million Dollar Club. Dr. Aukje Lamonica has been awarded a summer intern by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to work with her on her opioid research project and Dr. Marian Evans presented at the Women’s Leadership Symposium last month at Oxford University. Finally, we are incredibly proud of our undergraduate majors, David Robledo and Elizabeth Raber, who will be presenting at the SCSU Undergraduate Research Symposium.

This month, we will host two of our colleagues from Liverpool John Moores University’s Public Health Institute; Graeme Mitchell and Hannah Madden. During their visit, Graeme and Mike Pascucilla will be holding a forum on their food allergy research and we will continue discussion for future trans-Atlantic research and teaching collaborations.

As another academic year comes to a close, we are proud to report that our enrollments are strong, with what looks to be a robust MPH cohort entering this Fall. Faculty, staff, students and alumni are what make our Department what it is, and I bow to you for all the good work you are doing in public health!

—Ruth Bader Ginsberg

“Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.”



In This Edition

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Save the Date



SCSU Giving Day - Every dollar counts. No gift is too small!

Dear Students, Alumni, Faculty, and Friends:



I am writing to remind you that on April 16, Southern will host our 4th Annual Giving Day - a 24-hour fundraising event that will help support the university and its students. On this day, I would ask you to please consider supporting the **Public Health Student Development Fund**. This fund provides support to students seeking to further their professional development at conferences and study abroad experiences. This year, the first \$100,000 raised on Southern's Giving Day will be matched for gifts up to \$5,000 per donor! If you give \$25 to the Public Health Student Development Fund, it will be \$50! Additionally, I have added my own match up to \$750 - so you have ample opportunity to double your donation!

Early access to the site can be found by [clicking here](#). At the site, click on Give Now and choose the fund titled, Public Health in the drop down designation. Be sure to make your gift before the match is met! Thank you for your continued support!

Jean M. Breny, PhD, MPH

Elevating Health through
The Power of Many



Society for Public Health Education Conference 2019



Dr. Jean Breny has been elected to serve as the 2019-2020 SOPHE President. The Department of Public Health is an Affiliated Organizational Member (AOM), which gives membership and CHES study material discounts to students of our programs. SOPHE provides several scholarships to students, and we are proud to now offer a practitioner scholarship as well. Deadlines for these scholarships is May 17th and can be found by [clicking here](#) or visiting: <https://www.sophe.org/about/awards-fellowships-scholarships/>
Please join us next year in Atlanta, as we celebrate SOPHE'S 70th year!

Conference Presentations and Posters

Becoming Your Best You: Leadership Development for Current and Aspiring Health Educators.

Jean Breny, PhD, MPH; Angela Mickalide, PhD, David Birch, PhD

It's Worth It: Investing In A Statewide Breastfeeding Promotion Campaign

Michele Vancour, PhD, MPH

Poster: Establishing a model campus-wide breastfeeding initiative - Michele Vancour, PhD, MPH

Poster: Hunger on Campus: An Exploration of Food Insecurity Among Students at a Mid-Size, Public University in New England - Victoria Zigmont, PhD, MPH, Peggy Gallup, PhD, MPH, RN



Prof. Elizabeth Schwartz, Dr. Peggy Gallup, Dr. Marian Evans, Dr. Bill Faraclas, Dr. Vicki Zigmont, Dr. Aukie Lamonica, Dr. John Nwangwu, Dr. Deb Risisky, Michelle Mann, Dr. Stanley Bernard, Dr. Jean Breny, Dr. Deb Flynn, and Dr. Michele Vanvour.

SCSU Top Owls for Social Justice Awards

As the department secretary in Public Health, **Michelle Mann** was described by her nominator, a student worker in the department, as “Office Mom!” and “the glue that keeps this department together.” Mann, her nominator wrote, is thoughtful and caring, baking cakes for birthdays, taking student staff on museum trips, and open to learning about others’ backgrounds and cultures.

When it comes to social justice, Mann’s nominator wrote, “she is not complacent nor quiet in the eyes of oppression. Graduating from UCONN with a history degree, she found her stance against racial discrimination and promotes cultural awareness to her child and the rest of her staff.



Michelle Mann and Dian Brown-Albert



Dian Brown-Albert and Dr. Vicki Zigmont

Dr. Victoria Zigmont, Assistant Professor, is committed to improving Southern’s students’ health and well-being through her work on campus and in the community. She recognizes the relationship between social justice and academic (and personal) success for Southern students.

Her nominator wrote that Dr. Zigmont “is committed to a mission of social justice, which is evident in all that she does. She is an exceptional role model who fully embraces her students and colleagues with dignity, respect, kindness, compassion and civility.”



“The opposite of poverty is not wealth. In too many places, the opposite of poverty is justice.”

-Bryan Stevenson





"They are far from perfect but there is much to be learned from the Cuban approach of doing 'whatever they can with the little they have.'"
-Professor Varghese-Joseph



Prof. Preethi Varghese-Joseph



Dr. Enrique Chaple

Salud Cuba! By Preethi Varghese-Joseph, MPH

During March, I visited Cuba at the invitation of Reinaldo Funes Monzote, Professor of History at the University of Havana and a senior researcher at the Fundación Antonio Núñez Jimenez in Havana. I love traveling, and having lived in various countries at different times of my life, I welcomed this opportunity to spend two weeks to absorb and learn about Cuba, its people, and to understand its uniqueness.

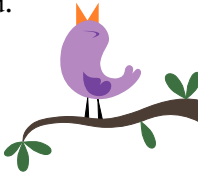
Despite many challenges- the Cuban Revolution, the trade embargoes, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union (a strong financial and political supporter), Cuba has achieved a level of self-sufficiency within different fields. A developing nation, Cuba has better if not equivalent health outcomes compared to high income countries, including the United States. According to the WHO, Cuba's total health care expenditure as a percent of GDP is only 8.6% compared to the United States at 17% which is the highest in the world. Life expectancy at birth (79.7) is on par with high income countries. Despite having the highest spending per capita, the U.S. does not have the healthiest population.

The Cuban healthcare system is a prime example of using low cost investments to achieve the most benefit to health in society. The success in this system is multifactorial, addressing the social

determinants of health by providing free education for all; supplying food at subsidized rates; ensuring housing for families, and encouraging worker co-operatives.

One of the highlights was a meeting with Dr. Enrique Chaple, a professor of epidemiology and anthropology in the Medical University of Havana. My medical and public health background lend a curiosity to understand the healthcare system in relation to what we have in our country. I was impressed by how much the country was able to achieve with so little.

According to Dr. Chaple, people receive care from doctors and nurses who live within their communities and they are linked with appropriate resources which translates to taking care of the person as a whole. Most communities have access to a medical clinic. For approximately 900 patients, there's a primary care doctor who is responsible for their mandatory health checks and health education, especially, in relation to lifestyle behaviors. Patients are then divided into categories based on their risk which influences the number of times they will be seen at the clinic. Cuba also produces innovations in medical research and trains thousands of doctors who provide services in far corners of the world.

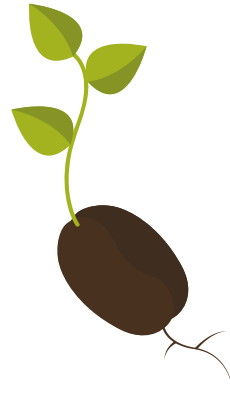


28th Annual Pie Day with REMEDY



Dr. Vicki Zigmont, Prof. Elizabeth Schwartz, and Josephine Ankrah

REMEDY (Recovered Medical Supplies for the Developing World) sponsored a successful fund raising event on April 1st. This year was Remedy's 28th pie day! Southern volunteers Professor Elizabeth Schwartz, Josephine Ankrah (MPH alum 2018), and Dr. Vicki Zigmont served over 500 pieces of pie to hospital staff at Yale New Haven Hospital. To learn more about REMEDY visit www.Med-eq.org.



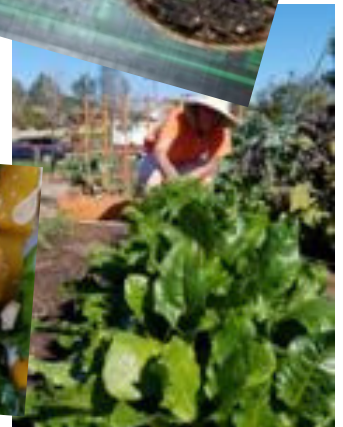
Josephine Ankrah

Professor Hurt's Spring Update from California

Happy spring from Carlsbad, California! Our "winter" was a little colder and wetter than usual, but I have no reason to complain! Fortunately, we were still able to maintain our vegetable garden, with the cool weather crops enjoying every minute!

We have all heard the term "farm to table." The meaning is self-explanatory, but there are many steps that are involved with successfully achieving the ultimate goal. The pictures below illustrate the entire process, starting with growing the plants from seeds, mostly from indoors. My hubby, Tom, is truly the driving force behind the actual growing and nurturing process. My role is to whip up tasty, healthy meals based on what is available in the garden at the time. Fun fact: I love to post my food pics on Instagram! Follow my healthy culinary adventures @sjoanie61.

Enjoy the spring, and all the beauty it has to offer!
Yours in health,
Susan Hurt, M.A.G.



Dr. Marian Evans Presents at Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium

On Thursday, March 21, 2019 Dr. Evans presented at the Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium at Somerville College in Oxford, England. The presentation was entitled, "Assessment of Contraception Knowledge in College Students" and was well received by the symposium. The symposium was held from March 20-22, and featured international presenters. After her presentation she took some time to visit with Public Health student and advisee (Massiel Romero) and colleague (Hannah Madden) from John Moores University in Liverpool.



Hannah Madden, Dr. Marian Evans, and Helen Hall



Dr. Marian Evans presenting and with student Massiel Romero

Student/Alumni News



Caitlin Daikus, MPH 19' - received an award on January 29th for 5 years of work at Special Olympics Connecticut. Congratulations Caitlin!

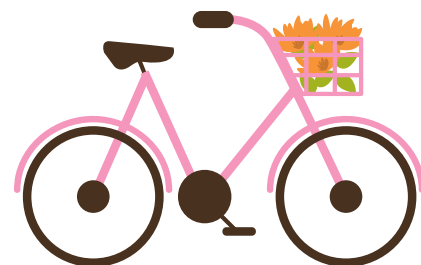
Fereshteh Ganjavi, BS 18' - is currently working as a Healthcare Coordinator at Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS). She has been working with an organization in New Haven called Elena's Light which supports women and children in the community experiencing challenges associated with immigration. To learn more about Elena's Light visit www.elenaslight.org.

To watch a video about the project, [click here](https://www.msnbc.com/ali-velshi/watch/thousands-of-refugees-in-the-u-s-celebrate-their-first-thanksgiving-1378577987753) or go to <https://www.msnbc.com/ali-velshi/watch/thousands-of-refugees-in-the-u-s-celebrate-their-first-thanksgiving-1378577987753>

Hazel Kayalioglu, BS 18' - was hired as a Research Assistant Epidemiologist at Yale and will start her new position in April. Congratulations Hazel!

Gina Lavorgna, MPH 18' - Gina started a new position as Public Relations Representative at The Renfrew Center in Old Greenwich, Connecticut. The Renfrew Center is the nation's first residential eating disorder facility and has been a pioneer in the treatment of eating disorders since 1985.

We are looking for more Alumni Updates! Please email your update to Ellen Clinesmith at clinesmithe1@southernct.edu.





"I specifically hope to engage in the World Merit goals of Good Health and Well-being, Reduce Inequalities, Gender Equality and Climate Action by collaborating with the Public Health department at SCSU and the New Haven community at large." - Haley O'Brien



World Merit's Council in Marrakech

By Haley O'Brien

Over the course of the past week, I had the honor to travel to Morocco and participate in World Merit's Council in Marrakech. The vision of World Merit is to "fight complex global issues by building confidence, raising aspiration and connecting diverse people of merit" (World Merit, 2019). This global organization is working to lead and empower youth around the world to develop strategies to tackle the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Although communities across the globe can identify the experience of these universal challenges within their own lives it is important to remember that these global disparities manifest differently in every community. I hope that we can use the knowledge and voices of people throughout our communities when considering how the 17 SDGs should be addressed here in New Haven.

The 5th Annual Undergraduate Research and Creativity Conference

Congratulations to Undergraduate Public Health students David Robledo and Elizabeth Raber! Both David and Elizabeth were selected to present at the Undergraduate Research and Creativity Conference on April 13, 2019.

Changing Safe Sex Attitudes and Behaviors among SCSU

Author(s): David Robledo Mentor: Jean M. Breny, PhD,

Analyzing the Effects of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Author(s): Elizabeth Raber Mentor: Aukje Lamonica, PhD



Haley O'Brien



Orlando House Food Pantry Article in Southern News

To read the full article, [click here](#).

Haljit Basuljevic - Southern News Reporter

For one-third of the students on campus, food insecurity is an issue. Because trying to relieve the problem can be personally difficult, Orlando House's food pantry offers help that students do not have to shy away from. Public Health Department Secretary Michelle Mann said the reception towards the food pantry has been encouraging. Since its official launch starting this semester, she has seen a dozen or so students quietly flow in and out of the pantry on a regular basis.

Inside a small closet situated on the second floor of the Orlando House, pretzel bags and canned vegetables and fruits are stuffed and stacked on top of each other. Below them are two drawers distinguished by labels ranging from whole grains to proteins. What began as a small gift to a select number of students became an open source for those who needed help.

Food Pantry For All Students!

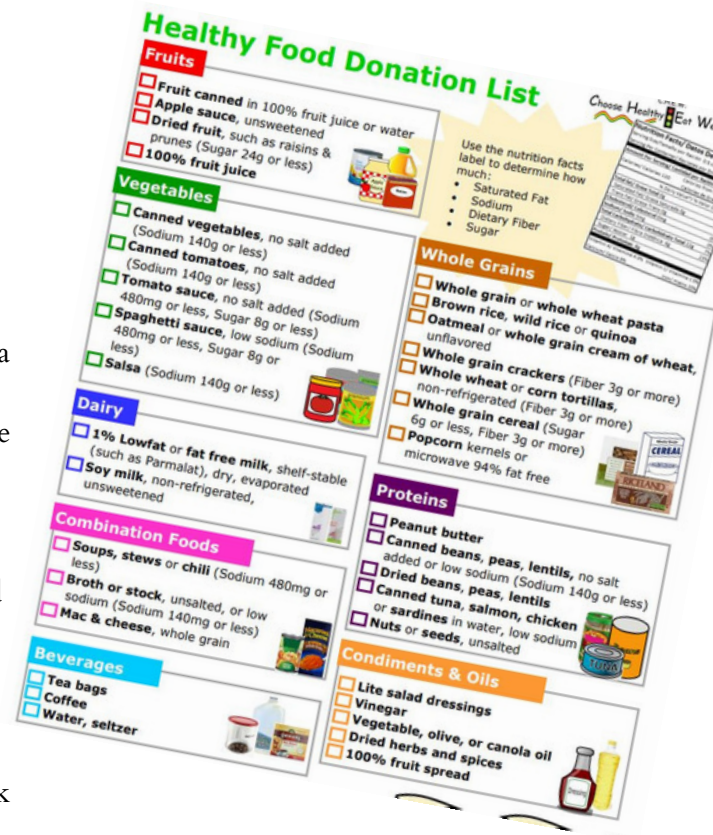
A message from Michelle Mann

Dear Food Injustice Fighters,

We want to thank those of you who have contributed... some we know of (Tamara Rissman, Jenn Botwick, Marcia Doran, Susan Hurt, Joan Lane, Peggy Gallup, Marian Evans and Deb Risisky are among recent donors), some we do not know of because you give anonymously. Vicki Zigmont and her perpetual bake sale of fabulous cookies has brought in considerable cash to add to our reserves. The Public Health Society and a fraternity also held a food drive for our pantry and donated nearly \$20 plus some food. There is a lot going on to keep this important mission alive and all these efforts are greatly appreciated.

We have a new system for tracking usage of our food bank (we need just a little data to track how many pounds of food we are giving out) so, either use the donation form we've created (located on the counter by the O-House front door) or leave your items in the office and we will log them in for you.

I wish you all could be here, as I often am, when a student pops in to take advantage of this service. Please continue to promote it among your students!



Feel free to drop off donations Monday - Friday between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM at the Orlando House, 144 Farnham Avenue. If you have any questions, please call 203-392-6226.

**Thank you for your
continued support!**



Events

April 13, 2019 - Undergraduate Research and Creativity Conference - Adanti Student Center

April 18, 2019 5:00 pm-6:00 pm - Capstone Topic Tapas - Adanti Student Center

May 13, 2019 - Graduate Research and Creativity Conference - Adanti Student Center, 3rd floor

May 30, 2019 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm - Adjunct Faculty Meeting - Orlando Houses

Commencement - for more information about graduation [click here](#)

May 22, 2019 6:00 pm - MPH Graduation Banquet - J Roos Restaurant

May 23, 2019 11:00 am-1:00 pm - MPH Graduation Reception - Orlando House

May 23, 2019 - MPH Commencement

May 24, 2019 - Undergraduate Commencement

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